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Review of Kultur und Musik nach 1945: Ästhetik im Zeichen des Kalten Krieges, edited by Ulrich J. Blomann

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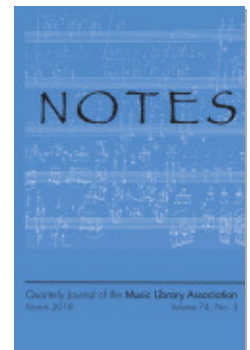
*Kultur und Musik nach 1945: Ästhetik im Zeichen des Kalten
Krieges. Kongressbericht Hambacher Schloss 11.–12. März
2013* ed. by Ulrich J. Blomann (review)

Emily Richmond Pollock

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Kultur und Musik nach 1945: Ästhetik im Zeichen des Kalten Krieges. Kongressbericht Hambacher Schloss 11.–12. März 2013. Edited by Ulrich J. Blomann. Saarbrücken: Pfau Verlag, 2015. [374 p. ISBN 9783897275263. €35.] Music examples, facsimiles, images, footnotes. In German.

In March 2013, Ulrich Blomann invited a group of academics, musicians, and critics to Hambach Castle near Neustadt an der Weinstraße in Germany for two days of presentations and discussions on the influence of the Cold War on music and culture. This volume, consisting of an introduction by Blomann and fifteen essays, commemorates that event. Blomann's opening address establishes the premise that German scholars and critics have been insufficiently sensitive to the ways in which the political realities of the Cold War shaped musical ideas and products after 1945. He characterizes this gap in scholarship as a consequence of the West's "propagandistic" insistence on the link between autonomous art and political freedom and sees the failure to investigate connections between music and politics in this era as a dogmatic avoidance, even a blindness, born out of Germans' unwillingness to confront the realities of denazification and reconstruction (p. 13). The volume's essays focus mainly on divided Germany, with brief forays into North and South Korea and the Soviet Union, and address Blomann's call to arms through heterogeneous methodologies, with some authors giving specific historical case studies and others attempting a more theoretical or reflective project.

The perspective is historical but often feels contemporary, as many critiques remain relevant today. Some topics come up repeatedly—e.g. the contested dominance of the avant-

garde, the stealthy politics of "apolitical" music, and the neglect, out of ignorance or prejudice, of especially East German artistic products—but a set of common principles is sometimes hard to discern. Luckily, for topics for which clarification or additional amplification might be helpful, Blomann has included interviews of the participants conducted by Gisela Nauck, and all of the panelists' discussions and audience questions have been transcribed, thus translating to the page what are arguably the most fruitful parts of any conference process. One of the volume's main strengths, then, is in the emerging dialogue among participants, both in the essays themselves and in the reproduced discussions.

The first three papers confirm that political thinking influenced the main aesthetic categories used during the Cold War, even (or especially) when art was positioned as autonomous and apolitical. In "Coordinates and Configurations" ("Kalter Krieg. Koordinaten und Konfigurationen"), Hanns-Werner Heister considers ideological aspects of anti-Communism and their influence on musical thinking throughout the twentieth century and up to the present. In his analysis, dyads of left and right, political and apolitical, modern and classical are all falsely hegemonic and tended to produce polarized, antagonistic musical discourses. Anne Shreffler, like Heister, suggests that musicological discourses have been influenced by the Cold War. Her essay analyzes criticisms by Carl Dahlhaus and Richard Taruskin concerning whether twelve-tone music could be politically engaged: while Dahlhaus believed that art could not by definition be politically engaged because that would inappropriately instrumentalize something that was meant to be autonomous, Taruskin criticized politically-engaged dodecaphony for

being ineffective at communicating with audiences. The third essay, "Inward Totalitarianism" ("Totalitarismus nach innen"), by composer Konrad Boehmer (who died in 2014), approaches the avant-garde from his perspective as a composer. He criticizes the dogma deployed by some proponents of twelve-tone music and diagnoses totalitarian tendencies in serialism as a system that he sees as having been unfairly dominant; later, in his interview with Nauck, he speculates that serial music could not have existed in its dominant form *without* the Cold War.

In the volume's second main section, Irmgard Jungmann, Achim Heidenreich, and Blomann himself offer further reflections on modernism's significance. In her essay concerning musical modernism's status as a "herald of freedom" (pp. 105–23), Jungmann outlines different ideologies of musical value, including the commodification and institutionalization of the avant-garde. Her historiography of the concept of musical freedom in the West and the East is nuanced and particular, as Jungmann ultimately argues that the Western myth of the avant-garde as a "free" art was fortified by capitalist manifestations such as radio, festivals, and an ideology of innovation at all costs. Heidenreich's essay treats Theodor W. Adorno and Paul Hindemith as teachers and writers, comparing their attitudes toward form, pitch organization, serialism, and new music "theory" in both of its commonly understood meanings, as expounded in *Das Altern der Neuen Musik* and *Sterbende Gewässer*, respectively. Adorno is also the subject of Blomann's essay, which advances an idiosyncratic reading of the critique of Igor Stravinsky in Adorno's *Philosophie der neuen Musik* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1949). Blomann argues that the way Adorno pits Stravinsky against

Arnold Schoenberg shows a polarized ideology born out of the Cold War's own oppositions; Stravinsky, Blomann suggests, was the collateral victim of Adorno's reaction against Socialist Realism, which he conflated with Stravinsky's purportedly backward-looking approach to modern music. Of all of the conference's topics, this is the one that appears to have inspired the most heated discussion: Blomann's thesis and evidence are thoroughly dissected, inspiring Blomann to publish a lengthy rejoinder to end the volume's second section. This exchange (the original essay, the question-and-answer session, and the reply) provides a compact example of an intense scholarly discussion, with all participants seen engaging gamely and expertly with their host as he defends a controversial idea about one of the twentieth century's most influential musical thinkers.

The other nine essays, split into the remaining three sections, treat a variety of more localized, focused topics. A scant two (under the heading "Internationale Perspektiven" ["Internationale Perspektiven"]) consider topics outside of Germany; evidently, this was not Blomann's priority when choosing participants. As such, the representation comes across as more random than curated, and the section's relationship to the German-centric work that surrounds it is not entirely clear. Nonetheless, both essays are well argued and interesting. Hans-Joachim Heßler considers the meaning of the Beatles in the Soviet Union, in particular investigating the notion that the group, who represented the West and freedom, had a hand in the destruction of Communism. In a book mostly focused on German "art" musics, his close reading of "Can't Buy Me Love," an example of the popular styles regarded as sexy, dangerous, and modern to young people in the Soviet Union, stands out.

Likewise, Jin-Ah Kim's detailed comparison of the definition and uses of folk musics in North and South Korea is a fresh perspective. She persuasively explains how different "inventions" of folk art came to take root in each country, as bolstered by contrasting policies and practices over the decades.

The remaining seven articles consider East and/or West Germany, organized into two sections. Several of these essays discuss individual figures: Jost Hermand elaborates the ideas of the East German composer Ernst Hermann Meyer, Jürgen Thym presents the Italian composer Luca Lombardi as a dialectical product of hybrid influences from both the East and West, and Hans-Klaus Jungheinrich argues that a modernist suspicion of eclecticism and leftist political influences resulted in a mixed reception of Hans Werner Henze. Critic and publisher Frieder Reininghaus suggests that he himself was similarly harmed by the doctrinaire nature of musical thinking during the Cold War. Elsewhere, Jürgen Schebera's essay draws on the archives of the Akademie der Künste to tell the history of how Hanns Eisler's *Deutsche Symphonie* came to be performed in London in 1962. The common discursive thread regarding interactions between the East and West crystallizes in Frank Schneider's essay, which reminds the reader of East Germany's own diverse new music ecosystem and argues that the isolation of East German composers has been greatly exaggerated. Schneider makes the case that much of this music has been unjustly ignored because less orthodox approaches to modernism have themselves been generally undervalued. Albrecht Dümmling's essay on the development and importance of German composer organizations is also particularly compelling. He shows how composers' concerns, such as performance opportunities, payment

structures, and the hierarchies of genres in which composers worked, were shaped by pragmatic administrative and political factors; this provides a welcome context for the careers of many of the other figures discussed by the volume's authors.

This book is likely not the last word on the relationship between Cold War politics and musical aesthetics, but it does provide a useful set of perspectives, if admittedly biased in favor of covering West and East Germany and "art" music. Several of the more rigorous essays serve as important contributions on individual topics, whether to the history of musicological ideas or to the history of specific composers and works. Where institutional questions complement the debates over competing aesthetics, they enrich the conversation immensely. Some readers may find themselves frustrated by the overall ratio of reflection to research, wishing for the balance to favor more facts and footnotes. A few of the essays are not fully documented, and not all contain meaty original research. Instead, for many of the volume's contributors, it has evidently been illuminating, even therapeutic, to explore the ways in which the Cold War may have shaped the fundamental discourses, assumptions, and value systems that undergirded their own formative years in music. As such, some of the essays, and in particular the discussion sessions and interviews, are actually best read as primary (rather than secondary) sources: as a set of vivid Cold War stories of how musicians and musicologists grew into particular sets of opposing values, and now reconcile and critique their own and others' dogmas. At times, they appear to be surprised to realize that they, too, are part of history.

EMILY RICHMOND POLLOCK
Massachusetts Institute of Technology